

# HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 5, Oct., 1942 Without Interracial Justice Social Justice Will Fail • New York, N. Y., 5 Cents

## DELINQUENCY AND RACIAL MINORITY GROUPS

We present as our Editorial this month the speech of His Excellency Bishop Bernard Sheil, made at the Catholic Charities Conferences in Kansas City this year, because, it is an outstanding Catholic Social Document, that created a profound and favorable reaction amongst the Negroes of America . . . It is an answer to their seekings for Justice . . . it is an answer to their hunger for Truth . . . It is another proof of the eternal vigilance, love and understanding of the Catholic Church, of ALL her children . . . in the Fold and out . . . With profound gratitude we print it. To us it is a bidding to carry on our humble Apostolate in the Harlems of America . . . It gives us courage to do so . . . Hope and faith . . . God bless His Excellency for giving it.

Delinquency is a rather class-conscious term, usually a connotation of critical superiority on the part of the speaker. It often implies that speaker and delinquent exist on moral planes completely remote from each other. Such an attitude is a false approach to the entire problem of delinquency. As a matter of fact, there is in all social relations only one plane — that of common humanity. It is with this fundamental qualification that the terms "delinquency" and "delinquent" are used in this paper.

The juxtaposition of delinquency and racial minority groups is neither arbitrary nor accidental; it is casual. Membership in such a group is of itself an important contributing factor of delinquency. It is not my purpose to present the many reasons for the verifiable truth of this statement. That is the work of the professional social worker and the trained statistician. I shall restrict my remarks to one contributing factor, and as applied to one such minority group, namely the Negro in America.

The Negro has been selected not because he represents the largest single minority group in the country but rather because in the case of these 12 million Americans it is fairly obvious that delinquency is a practical protest against a discrimination that is ethically indefensible, socially unjustifiable, and radically un-Christian. Denied political, economic, and social equality, a disproportionate number of Negroes have translated a deep inner frustration into an external attitude that is completely anti-social.

Segregation in what we are forced with an understandable sense of shame to call the "Christian ghettos" is not conducive to normal, social outlooks. Hemmed in by the barriers of conscious, deliberate discrimination, the Negro discovers at an early and critical period of his life that those innate human desires for liberty, for physical well-being, for all those common things that spell human happiness are the unique privilege of those whose very articulate "superiority" is based on a difference in pigmentation. The effects of such discrimination on the individual Negro and on the community have been disastrous and incalculable.

The time has come to apply the remedies and to apply them quickly. These people are no longer satisfied with weasel words and insincere promises. Their demands are most reasonable. They are simply asking that they be given their rights as American citizens, rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution of this country. The opportunity to progress, to better themselves economically, to share in the industrial, social, political, and cultural life of America — these are the things that the American Negro seeks — and he can no longer be denied them. If the Negro is worthy to die with the white men, then he is worthy to live with him on terms of honest, objective equality. It is the most dangerous kind of hypocrisy to wage a war for democracy and at the same time to deny the basic benefits of democracy to any group of citizens. Democracy is not

divisible. We cannot be part free and part slave any more in 1942 than we could in 1862. Any person whether he be public official, industrial leader, educator, or churchman, who advocates or practices race discrimination, is guilty of contributing to disunity — and disunity is a most dangerous enemy, since it so often prepares the soil for Fascism.

Times of crisis such as the present tend to clarify basic issues. One thing emerges with undeniable clearness; political and economic discrimination cannot be reconciled with democracy. The decisive hour has come in which it must be settled whether the favored classes would rather save their pride and privileges or save their country. The case of the Negro, in common with all dispossessed people in America, symbolizes this issue. The time has come also to reaffirm the essential function of the State which is not to be a sublimated watchman of private property but to secure the social well-being and happiness of all its citizens. The cobwebs of feudalism and retrogression must be removed from the mind of America so that she may grasp with clear vision the meaning, the value, and the destiny of democracy. Such a vision is capable of inspiring a nation to sacrifice, to labor, even to die for its attainment. Without it, victory has a very hollow ring. It cannot be too often repeated that Nazism can only be completely destroyed by another faith, a faith in democracy that is deeper and stronger.

(Continued on Page 3)

Vol. 2

No. 5

34 WEST 135th STREET

Tel. AUdubon 3-4892

**HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS**

CATHERINE DE HUECK ..... Editor  
 BELLE R. BATES ..... Asst. Editor  
 EDDIE DOHERTY ..... Contributing Editor  
 GRACE FLEWELLING ..... Circulation Manager

Single Copies .05 - Sub. 50c per Year

Owned and Operated by Friendship House  
 Printed in N. Y. by Carroll Press

**THE BARONESS JOTS IT DOWN**

Ann writes from the Chicago Friendship House . . . "So, I tackled the floor inch by inch. Tack by tack . . . layer by layer." Previously she reported that she hoped the landlord would attend to the million of tacks and the depths of linoleum of various hues and sizes that littered the floor of the new Centres. Now she herself is at it . . . good for Ann. Hope she does not get too bad a backache.

But she goes on: "We need the Signs painted on the window . . . we need fixtures . . . we need lumber for the shelves . . . Now, let me see . . . new linoleum for the floor, second-hand, maybe will do . . . yes, 300 dollars would fix us up. Do you know where I could get it?"

Three hundred dollars for Chicago Friendship House . . . The other day on the radio I heard the cost of the war per month . . . in my poor mind three hundred dollars seems almost as tremendous as that. No, I don't know where Ann will get them . . . but I shall ask the Holy Ghost . . . maybe He knows . . . or do you . . . our Chicago readers? If you do, write about it to ANN HARRIGAN or ELLEN TARRY at the Friendship House, 309 East 43rd Street, Chicago, Ill. And they have a telephone now. You can ask information about it in Chicago. It is listed under Friendship House too.

Herbert McKnight . . . remember him? He wrote for Friendship House News recently. He is one of the boys who graduated from St. John, Collegeville so well last year. Well, he is now at Howard University, School of Medicine . . . yes siree, he is going to be a Doctor. We have his tuition all paid for by a friend of Blessed Martin, but there is room and board to take care of, and the Capital IS an expensive place to live in . . . yes, it certainly is. He needs twenty-five dollars a month for that alone. We would like to have this necessity taken care of till Christmas by some generous soul . . . for Herb will make such a swell Catholic Doctor . . . Seventy-five dollars will do it . . . indeed it will. Any bidders?

Volunteers . . . volunteers . . . where are you?? Harlem Friendship House needs you so! We are being asked to start the "Children in War" program. Nurseries . . . larger club rooms . . . more courses in First Aid, Nutrition . . . We are more than willing . . . Harlem needs this program so much . . . but we need first, foremost and last, young people with courage, patriotic vision and love of God to help us. Craft, recreation, supervision, clerical help, education, catechism . . . all are needed . . . will you come? And don't worry about Harlem being dangerous . . . it isn't, at all. Haven't we ten women of various ages lived here five years, safe, sound and unmolested? Nothing will happen to you. Come and help those who need help most . . . PLEASE !

You sure have been good to us . . . we HAVE been eating SO MUCH BETTER lately . . . because you our friends, have been sending us so generously, money marked "food," and that is exactly where it goes . . . more meat for the soup pot . . . more vegetables too, we even had 5 pounds of grapes . . . the sweet kind at ten cents per pound and once last week a DELICIOUS PIE . . . maybe pies haven't got vitamins but boy do they break the monotony of a model war menu style 1943, on which by the way Friendship House Staff Workers have been existing since 1938 . . . And are we ahead of you-all in expert planning of same . . . Ever want to feed the family on a few cents healthily? Just write to us . . . Belle says that since your good cheques have been coming in she feels sure that she is a few ounces heavier and a few millimeters huskier . . . We hope so . . . Thanks and thanks again.

Do you ever get stuck when some non-Catholic asks you a question about your Faith? Did you ever try to explain Holy Eucharist, or Matrimony or Confession without going too deep into theology? A good book for you — and your non-Catholic friends too is "The Catholic Pattern," written by a layman named Woodlock . . . it's as simple as A-B-C . . . as logical as two and two equal four . . . and it explains our Catholic way of thinking in 1942 with the lucidity of a dictionary, and as unpietistic . . . something a lot of non-Catholics can't swallow in our so-called pious outlook . . . well, this book has none of that. It's good stuff for Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Marie, who runs the Clothing Room with the efficiency of an executive secretary earning one hundred a week — all for the love of God — is looking very sad these days . . . the clothes just aren't . . . she hasn't been able to have a "men's day" for quite awhile lately . . . no suits, no coats, no shirts, no shoes or socks to give them . . . the men are there patiently waiting . . . but the clothes aren't. This is true of women's and children's things too . . . but not quite as bad. We know everyone is wearing their clothes longer now because of the war . . . but look through your closets once more . . . will you, please . . . and send us what you don't absolutely need . . . because we need them badly . . . especially winter clothes . . . for the winds blow just as cold in Harlem as any place else . . . and when you're maybe sick and hungry, if you've got a warm coat . . . it makes a big difference. Please SEND them, because we are having trouble picking things up these days with the gas and tire shortage . . . only those who live close by . . . call Friendship House, and we will send one of our workers for them . . . Tuesday afternoon is "pick-up" day for us.

How would you have us, as we are—  
 Or sinking 'neath the load we bear?  
 Our eyes fixed forward on a star—  
 Or gazing empty at despair?

Rising or falling? Men or things?  
 With dragging pace or footsteps fleet?  
 Strong willing sinews in your wings?  
 Or tightening chains about your feet?

—James Weldon Johnson

## DELINQUENCY AND RACIAL MINORITY GROUPS

(Continued from Page 1)

It is true that the faults and failures attributed to democracy are in reality caused by men who, while giving service to democratic principles, deny in their actions that justice which is the very keystone of the American democratic structure. The power and influence of these men, out of all proportion to their numbers, must be broken for the good of America. It is the common man everywhere, whether he be Russian, English, Chinese, or American who is fighting the battle for freedom in the world today. The fruits of victory in terms of honest, practical democracy must be the share of the common man in that victory. Once more I repeat: promises will not satisfy those who are enduring the blood and the sweat and the tears which war brings. They are fighting for fundamental realities: liberty to speak, think, and worship as their conscience dictates, economic security free from the specter of unemployment and enforced poverty, the opportunity for education, for the normal fulfillment of those normal human desires which spell human happiness. These are the realities for which they fight. Not the shadow but the substance of these things must be the reward for their sacrifice.

Nor can the churches be absolved from all blame for that social injustice, economic inequality, and racial discrimination which have been such entrenched obstacles to the full development of American democracy. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man are the basic dogmas of the Christian faith; they are the expression of the creation and the Incarnation with all the relationship that these imply. More, they must be the very source of our Christian way of life. Failure to understand this is failure to grasp the very core of the Christian religion. Nor do they offer any room for compromise. Too often in the past religious leaders under the guise of prudence have failed to appreciate or to teach fearlessly what the Brotherhood of Man means in terms of practical justice for the poor, the underprivileged, the oppressed of the world. Too much respect for the local banker, industrialist, or politician has caused them to be silent when the teachings of Christ should have been literally shouted from the house-tops. It is true that the Gospel is to be

preached to all men of all stations in life, but it must be the same Gospel offered without suspicion of concession or surrender.

History gives overwhelming evidence of this one fact: that when the Church loses sight of her first duty to Christ's poor, to the masses — or the proletariat, if you prefer that term — then does the Church begin to decline, to become infected with worldliness, to lose the love and the loyalty of the small people, the little ones of Christ, whom the Church must not only teach and guide but also protect.



BL. MARTIN

Let us make no mistake. The strength of the Church lies not in real estate holdings, not in institutions, but in the mass of the common people. It is their rights that the Church must vindicate before the world.

One other fact becomes increasingly evident and it is this: the Church is being judged more and more by the social effects of her teaching which are but the practical application of her religious and moral precepts. There is a time for the virtue of prudence; there is a time also for courageous thinking and acting; there

is never a time for compromise with fundamental principles. Christianity has a solution for social problems, a solution based on the permanency of truth. To allow communism to become synonymous with social justice is not only stupid, but false. That this was done must be charged to those leaders who failed utterly to understand the vast revolutionary movement that has been under way for the past 25 years and which may have such serious and far-reaching implications for the Church and for the entire cause of religion.

The problem of the Negro in America is but one aspect of a wide social problem. The Church in this country at this moment is face to face with the problem. It must be met by a reaffirmation in action of the great Christian virtues of justice and charity. Jim Crowism in the Mystical Body of Christ is a disgraceful anomaly. Christianity pays no heed to accidental differences of race, color, or economic status. To see Christ in every creature is of the very essence of the Christian religion. If Catholics have failed to learn this truth and to apply it to life, then we must admit that our system of education has failed in a most fundamental point. The question, then, of delinquency and racial groups is not so important in itself as it is within the general framework of the entire problem of social justice. I am completely convinced that a solution of this pressing problem shall carry with it a solution to most of the related questions, of which delinquency is but one.

To all of which I would like to add this final practical thought: if the Church takes her rightful place in the very forefront of the fight for social justice, for the vindication of the rights of the common man, she need have no fear of communism or of any other revolutionary movement, because she proposes to men a religion that is far more revolutionary since it seeks literally to "renovate the face of the earth," to satisfy all the urges and desires of the whole human personality. What philosophy, what economic system, could offer such a challenging doctrine? We have the truth, we have the means, we have the personnel. Let us, for the love of God, use them.



## STAFF REPORTER

By B. R. B.

F. H. is zooming full speed ahead into a very busy, exciting, and diversified winter program. For instance the increased activity in the club rooms where the children and youth play ping pong, monopoly, checkers and group games. Work at crafts, their little newspaper, which comes out every month — and can they sing, a good instructor would make them a top choral group, I'm sure. We have some First Aiders too. Last spring a beautiful new Library opened just around the corner from F. H. and once a week the children go there for a story hour. The few volunteer workers we have do a splendid job — we would appreciate a few more, though, to take the children to the park and also gym. Do you have any spare moments?

And to bring up our "Monday Nights" again — most important feature of the week. You'll be missing a good well balanced education if you don't come. Some of you can't, of course, but for those who can — don't miss it! First Monday night of the month will be devoted to "Inter-racialism" with a Negro speaker. Second Monday "A Catholic looks at life in 1942." Third Monday a complete course in Christian Social Reconstruction. Here's your opportunity to learn your Church's answer to our modern social problems. Fourth Monday's will cover "Saints and Modern Problems." These lectures will be given by selected, eminent Catholic priests and lay people. We'll be expecting you next Monday at 8:30.

The Co-ops and Credit Unions are

## POPE PIUS XII

*Letter of November 12, 1939 to the American Hierarchy*

"We confess that we feel a special paternal affection, which is certainly inspired by heaven, for the Negro people dwelling among you; for in the field of religion and education we know that they need special care and comfort and are very deserving of it. We therefore invoke an abundance of heavenly blessing and we pray fruitful success for those whose generous zeal is devoted to their welfare.

## IT OCCURRED TO US . . .

It occurred to us that it would be well for us mutually to reflect on the purpose of FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS . . . and also to give you an explanation for the additional "touch" which was added to our masthead last month. We hope you noticed it . . . but of course you did.

The policy of this Little Brother of the many Big Brothers in the Catholic Press is very simple and direct:

1. To raise its voice in combatting Racial Injustice.
2. To never tire of repeating that "Without Interracial Justice Christian Social Justice will Fail."



repeat always that without Social Justice, which includes Inter-racial Justice, neither the world nor even the USA can save their national or individual souls, nor achieve the lasting Peace of God for which all hunger.

4. To promote Lay Catholic Action amongst the Negro according to the expressed wishes of His Holiness, Pope Pius XII. (See box at left.)
5. To keep its readers informed of the works of Friendship House.
6. To endeavor to picture the true conditions of Negroes throughout the Harlems of America.
7. To try to do all this in Charity and Humility, obedient to the direction of the Hierarchy, cognisant of its smallness, but not afraid of it.

This paper places its works under the patronage of the Holy Ghost, Blessed Martin and St. Francis de Sales, praying that it might do its "little works" for the greater glory of God. PRAY FOR US!

## THE EDITORS

a part of our program too. Wednesday is their night. Beginning the first Tuesday in November we shall have a Labor School. Fr. Carey from

Xavier Labor School, established in 1911, will teach Labor Ethics. That's really quite a program. Can you do better? Adios!

Return to FRIENDSHIP HOUSE  
34 West 135th St., New York, N. Y.  
Return Postage Guaranteed

Sec. 562 P. L. & R.

Mrs. Joseph A. Butler  
1967-66 St.,  
Brooklyn, N. Y.